



ADVENTURE  
NUMBER  
FIVE

## Nine Points of Law

By E. W. HORNUNG.  
Author of "The Shadow of the Rope," "The Rogue's March,"  
"A Bride from the Bush," "Stingaree Stories," "Dead Men Tell No  
Tales," etc.  
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SIXTH STORY  
OUT NEXT  
WEEK



### Fifth Raffles Story

WELL," said Raffles, "what do you make of it?"  
I read the advertisement once more before replying.  
It was in the last column of the Daily Telegraph, and it ran:

TWO THOUSAND POUNDS REWARD—The above sum may be earned by any one qualified to undertake delicate mission and prepared to run certain risk. Apply by telegram, Security, London.  
"I think," said I, "it's the most extraordinary advertisement that ever got into print!"

Raffles smiled.  
"Not quite all that, Bunny; still, extraordinary enough, I grant you."

"Look at the figure!"  
"It is certainly large."

"And the mission—and the risk!"

"Yes; the combination is frank, to say the least of it. But the really original point is requiring applications by telegram to a telegraphic address! There's something in the fellow who thought of that, and something in his game; with one word he chokes off the million who answer an advertisement every day—when they can raise the stamp. My answer cost me five bob; but then I prepaid another."

"You don't mean to say that you've applied?"

"Rather," said Raffles. "I want £2,000 as much as any man."

"Put your own name?"

"Well—no, Bunny. I didn't. In point of fact I smell something interesting and illegal, and you know what a cautious chap I am. I signed myself Glasspool, care of Hickey, 38 Conduit street; that's my tailor, and after sending the wire I went round and told him what to expect. He promised to send the reply the moment it came. I shouldn't be surprised if that's it!"

And he was gone before a double knock on the outer door had done ringing through the rooms, to return next minute with an open telegram and a face full of news.

"What do you think?" said he. "Security's that fellow Addenbrook, the police court lawyer, and he wants to see me instantly!"

"Do you know him, then?"

"Merely by repute. I only hope he doesn't know me. He's the chap who got six weeks for sniffling too close to the wind in the Sutton-Wilmer case; everybody wondered why he wasn't struck off the rolls. Instead of that he's got a first-rate practice on the seamy side, and every blackguard with half a case takes it straight to Bennett Addenbrook. He's probably the one man who would have the cheek to put in an advertisement like that, and the one man who could do it without exciting suspicion. It's simply in his line; but you may be sure there's something shady at the bottom of it. The odd thing is that I have long made up my mind to go to Addenbrook myself if accidents should happen."

"And you're going to him now?"

"This minute," said Raffles, brushing his hat; "and so are you."

"But I came in here to drag you out to lunch."

"You shall lunch with me when we've seen this fellow. Come on, Bunny, and we'll choose your name on the way. Mine's Glasspool, and don't you forget it."

Mr. Bennett Addenbrook occupied substantial offices in Wellington street, Strand, and was out when we arrived, but he had only just gone "over the way to the court," and five minutes sufficed to produce a brisk, fresh-colored, resolute looking man, with a very confident rather festive air, and black eyes that opened wide at the sight of Raffles.

"Mr.—Glasspool?" exclaimed the lawyer.

"My name," said Raffles, with dry effrontery.

"Not up at Lord's, however?" said the other, slyly. "My dear sir, I have seen you take far too many wickets to make any mistake!"

For a single moment Raffles looked venomous; then he shrugged and smiled, and the smile grew into a little cynical chuckle.

"So you have bowled me out in my turn?" said he. "Well, I don't think there's anything to explain. I am harder up than I wished to admit under my own name, that's all, and I want that thousand pounds reward."

"Two thousand," said the solicitor. "And the man who is not above an alias happens to be just the sort of man I want; so don't let that worry you, my dear sir. The matter, however, is of a strictly private and confidential character." And he looked very hard at me.

"Quite so," said Raffles. "But there was something about a risk?"

"A certain risk is involved."

"Then surely three heads will be better than two. I said I wanted that thousand pounds; my friend here wants the other. We are both cursedly hard up, and we go into this thing together or not

at all. Must you have his name, too? I should give him my real one, Bunny."

Mr. Addenbrook raised his eyebrows over the card I found for him; then he drummed upon it with his finger nail, and his embarrassment expressed itself in a puzzled smile.

"The fact is, I find myself in a difficulty," he confessed at last.

"Yours is the first reply I have received; people who can afford to send long telegrams don't rush to the advertisements in the Daily Telegraph; but, on the other hand, I was not quite prepared to hear from men like yourselves. Candidly, and on consideration, I am not sure that you are the stamp of men, for me—men who belong to good clubs! I rather intended to appeal to the—er—adventurous classes."

"We are adventurous," said Raffles gravely.

"But you respect the law?"

The black eyes gleamed shrewdly.

"We are not professional rogues, if that's what you mean," said Raffles, smiling.

"But on our beam-ends we are; we would do a good deal for a thousand pounds apiece, eh, Bunny?"

"Anything," I murmured.

The solicitor rapped his desk.

"I'll tell you what I want you to do. You can but refuse. It's illegal, but it's illegality in a good cause; that's the risk, and my client is prepared to pay for it. He will pay for the attempt, in case of failure; the money is as good as yours once you consent to run the risk. My client is Sir Bernard Debenham of Broom Hall, Esher."

"I know his son," I remarked.

Raffles knew him, too, but said nothing, and his eye drooped disapproval in my direction. Bennett Addenbrook turned to me.

"Then," said he, "you have the privilege of knowing one of the most complete young blackguards about town, and the sons of orphans of the whole trouble. As you know the son, you may know the father, too, at all events by reputation; and in that case I needn't tell you that he is a very peculiar man. He lives alone in a storehouse of treasures which no eyes but his ever behold. He is said to have the finest collection of pictures in the south of England, though nobody ever sees them to judge; pictures, fiddles and furniture are his hobby, and he is undoubtedly very eccentric. Nor can one deny that there has been considerable eccentricity in his treatment of his son. For years Sir Bernard paid his debts, and the other day, without the slightest warning, not only refused to do so any more, but absolutely stopped the lad's allowance. Well, I'll tell you what has happened; but, first of all, you must know, or you may remember, that I appeared for young Debenham in a little scrape he got into a year or two ago. I got him off all right, and Sir Bernard paid me handsomely on the nail. And no more did I hear or see of either of them until one day last week.

The lawyer drew his chair nearer ours and leaned forward, with a hand on either knee.

"On Tuesday of last week I had a telegram from Sir Bernard I was to go to him at once. I found him waiting for me in the drive; without a word he led me to the picture gallery, which was locked and darkened, drew up a blind, and stood simply pointing to an empty picture frame. It was a long time before I could get a word out of him. Then at last he told me that that frame had contained one of the rarest and most valuable pictures in England—in the world—an original Velasquez, I have checked this," said the lawyer, "and it seems literally true; the picture was a portrait of the Infanta Maria Terest, said to be one of the artist's greatest works, second only to another portrait of one of the popes in Rome—so they told me at the National Gallery, where they had its history by heart. They say that the picture is practically priceless. And young Debenham has sold it for £5,000!"

"The deuce he has," said Raffles.

I inquired who had bought it.

"A Queensland legislator by the name of Craggs—the Hon. John Montagu Craggs, M. L. C., to give him his full title. Not that we knew anything about him on Tuesday last; we didn't even know for certain that young Debenham had stolen the picture. But he had gone down for money on the Monday evening, had been refused, and it was plain enough that he had helped himself in this way; he had threatened revenge, and this was it. Indeed, when I hunted him up in town on the Tuesday night he confessed as much in the most brazen manner imaginable. But he wouldn't tell me who was the purchaser, and finding out took the rest of the week; but I did find out, and a nice time I've had of it ever since! Backward and forward between Esher and the Metropole, where the Queenslanders is staying, sometimes twice a day; threats, offers, prayers, entreaties, not one of them a bit of good!"

"But," said Raffles, "surely it's a clear case? The sale was illegal; you can pay him back his money and force him to give the picture up."

"Exactly; but not without an action and a public scandal, and that my client declines to face. He would rather lose even his picture than have the whole thing get into the papers; he has disowned his son, but he will not disgrace him; yet his picture he must have by hook or crook, and there's the rub! I am to get it back by fair means or foul. He gives me carte blanche in the matter, and I verily believe would throw in a blank check if asked. He offered one to the Queenslanders, but Craggs simply tore it in two; the one old boy is as much a character as the other, and between the two of them I'm at my wits' end."

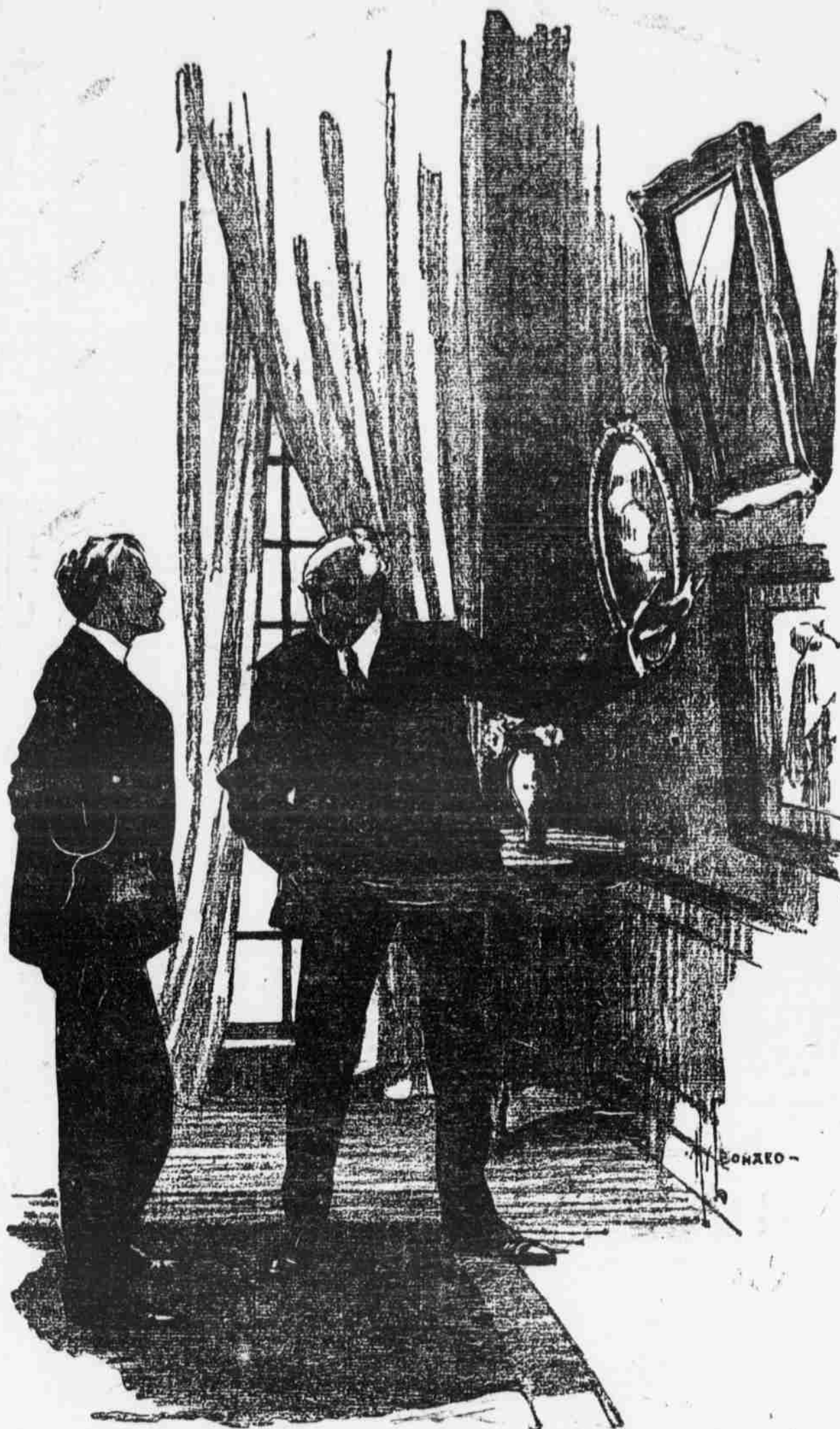
"So you put that advertisement in the paper?" said Raffles, in the dry tones he had adopted throughout the interview.

"As a last resort. I did."

"And you wish us to steal this picture?"

It was magnificently said; the lawyer flushed from his hair to his collar.

"I knew you were not the men!" he groaned. "I never thought of men of your stamp! But it's not stealing," he exclaimed heatedly; "it's recovering stolen property. Besides, Sir Bernard will pay him his



"HE STOOD SIMPLY POINTING TO AN EMPTY PICTURE FRAME."

five thousand as soon as he has the picture; and, you'll see, old Craggs will be just as loth to let it come out as Sir Bernard himself. No, no—it's an enterprise, an adventure, if you like—but not stealing."

"You yourself mentioned the law," murmured Raffles.

"And the risk," I added.

"We pay for that," he said once more.

"But not enough," said Raffles, shaking his head. "My good sir, consider what it means to us. You spoke of those clubs; we should not only get kicked out of them, but put in prison like common burglars! It's true we're hard up, but it simply isn't worth it at the price. Double your stakes, and I for one am your man."

Addenbrook wavered.

"Do you think you could bring it off?"

"We could try."

"But you have no—"

"Experience? Well, hardly!"

"And you would really run the risk for £4,000?"

Raffles looked at me. I nodded.

"We would," said he, "and blow the odds!"

"It's more than I can ask my client to pay," said Addenbrook, growing firm.

"Then it's more than you can expect us to risk."

"You are in earnest?"

"God wot!"

"Say three thousand if you succeed!"

"Four is our figure, Mr. Addenbrook."

"Then I think it should be nothing if you fail."

"Doubles or quits?" cried Raffles. "Well, that's sporting. Done!"

Addenbrook opened his lips, half rose, then sat back in his chair and looked long and shrewdly at Raffles—never once at me.

"I know your bowling," said he, reflectively. "I go up to Lord's whenever I want an hour's real rest, and I've seen you bowl again and again—yes, and take the best wickets in England on a plumb pitch. I don't forget the last Gentleman and Players; I was there. You're up to every trick—every one. \* \* \* I'm inclined to think that if anybody could haul out this old Australian \* \* \* Damme, I believe you're my very man!"

The bargain was clinched at the Cafe Royal, where Bennett Addenbrook insisted on playing host at an extravagant luncheon. I remember that he took his whack of champagne with the nervous freedom of a man at high pressure, and have no doubt I kept him in countenance by an equal indulgence; but Raffles, ever an exemplar in such matters, was more abstemious even than his wont, and very poor company to boot. I can see him now, his eyes in his plate—thinking—thinking. I can see the solicitor glancing from him to me in an apprehension of which I did my best to disabuse him by reassuring looks. At the close Raffles apologized for his preoccupation, called for an A. B. C. time table, and announced his intention of catching the 3:02 to Esher.

"You must excuse me, Mr. Addenbrook," said he, "but I

have my own idea, and for the moment I should much prefer to keep it to myself. It may end in a fizzle, so I would rather not speak about it to either of you just yet. But, speak to Sir Bernard I must, so will you write me one line to him on your card? Of course, if you wish, you must come down with me and hear what I say; but I really don't see much point in it."

And, as usual, Raffles had his way, though Bennett Addenbrook showed some temper when he was gone, and I myself shared his annoyance to no small extent. I could only tell him that it was in the nature of Raffles to be self-willed and secretive; but that no man of my acquaintance had half his audacity and determination; that I, for my part, would trust him through and through, and let him gang his own gait every time. More I dared not say, even to remove those chill misgivings with which I knew that the lawyer went his way.

That day I saw no more of Raffles, but a telegram reached me when I was dressing for dinner:

"Be in your rooms tomorrow from noon and keep rest of day clear. Raffles."

It had been sent off from Waterloo at 6:42.

So Raffles was back in town; at an earlier stage of our relations I should have hunted him up then and there, but now I knew better. His telegram meant that he had no desire for my society that night or the following forenoon; that when he wanted me I should see him soon enough.

And see him I did, toward 1 o'clock next day. I was watching for him from my window in Mount street when he drove up furiously in a hansom and jumped out without a word to the man. I met him next minute at the lift gates, and he fairly pushed me back into my rooms.

"Five minutes' notice!" he cried. "Not a moment more."

And he tore off his coat before flinging himself into the nearest chair.

"I'm fairly on the rush," he panted; "having the very devil of a time! Not a word till I tell you all I've done. I settled my plan of campaign yesterday at lunch. The first thing was to get in with this man Craggs; you can't break into a place like the Metropole, it's got to be done from the inside. Problem one, how to get at the fellow. Only one sort of pretext would do—it must be something to do with this blessed picture so that I might see where he'd got it, and all that. Well, I couldn't go and ask to see it out of curiosity, and I couldn't go as a second representative of the other old chap, and it was thinking how I could go that made me such a bear at lunch. But I saw my way before we got up. If I could only lay hold of a copy of the picture I might ask leave to go and compare it with the original. So down I went to Esher to find out if there was a copy in existence, and was at Broom Hall for one hour and a half yesterday afternoon. There was no copy there, but they must exist, for Sir Bernard himself (there's a copy there) has allowed a couple to be made since the picture has been in his possession. He hunted up the painters' addresses, and the rest of the evening I spent in hunting up the painters themselves; but their work had been done on commission; one copy had gone out of the country, and I'm still in the track of the other."

"Then you haven't seen Craggs yet?"

"Seen him and made friends with him, and, if possible, he's the funnier old cuss of the two; but you should study 'em both. I took the bull by the horns this morning went in and lied like Ananias, and it was just as well I did—the old ruffian sails for Australia by tomorrow's boat. I told him a man wanted to sell me a copy of the celebrated Infanta Maria Terest of Velasquez, that I'd been down to the supposed owner of the picture, only to find that he had just sold it to him. You should have seen his face when I told him that! He grinned all round his wicked old head. 'Did old Debenham admit the sale?' says he; and when I said he had he chuckled to himself for about five minutes. He was so pleased that he did just what I hoped he would do; he showed me the great picture; luckily, it isn't by any means a large one—also the case he's got it in. It's an iron map case, in which he brought over the plans of his land in Brisbane; he wants to know who would suspect it of containing an old master, too? But he's had it fitted with a new Chubb lock, and I managed to take an interest in the key while he was glancing over the canvas. I had the wax in the palm of my hand, and I shall make my duplicate this afternoon."

Raffles looked at his watch and jumped up, saying he had given me a minute too much.

"By the way," he added, "you've got to dine with him at the Metropole tonight!"

"I?"

"Yes; don't look so scared. Both of us are invited—I swore you were dining with me. I accepted for us both; but I shan't be there."

His clear eye was upon me, bright with meaning and with mischief. I implored him to tell me what his meaning was.

"You will dine in his private sitting room," said Raffles; "it adjoins his bedroom. You must keep him sitting as long as possible, Bunny, and talking all the time!"

In a flash I saw his plan.

"You're going for the picture while we're at dinner?"

"I am."

"If he hears you?"

"He shan't."

"But if he does?"

And I fairly trembled at the thought.

"If he does," said Raffles, "there will be a collision, that's all."



"WORTH FIFTY THOUSAND POUNDS, MY BOY."



"I'VE GOT IT!" I CRIED.